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Country must prepare to benefit from 4IR

Country must prepare to benefit from 4IR DELEGATION: Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba, Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel, Minister in the Presidency Jeff Radebe, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, International Relations and Cooperation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Public Works Minister Nathi Nhleko and Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies at the World Economic Forum. Picture: Elmond Jiyane

GCIS THERE will be "serious winners and losers" as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution 4IR and South Africa needs to be properly prepared and positioned to reap the benefits, or be saddled with the negative consequences. Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies said emerging technologies have the capacity to benefit humanity in all sorts of ways, "reducing lowskilled backbreaking useless toil and replacing it with something more satisfying". Davies, part of the South African delegation in Davos for the World Economic Forum WEF, however, warned that "in a world with inequalities, this requires high levels of technological literacy". "We don't know what the job implications are going to be. Lower skilled people are going to find it more difficult to get jobs, small businesses may find it easier to enter markets because the technology required may require less sunken capital." Davies cited the recent WEF report Country Readiness for Future of Production which listed South Africa at 45th in the world and first in Africa. He said that in terms of the Brics Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa countries, South Africa followed China, placed fifth, India and Russia were 30th and 35th respectively, and Brazil at 41. "There are a lot of things the reports cite which we take seriously Where we are good is on science and innovation and adoption of technologies; where we are not so good is on maths literacy, science education and skills development. "Government is looking at the implications of these technological changes and ensuring that our country is as prepared as it can be so that we can reap the benefits, while minimising the challenges. "There will be challenges and disruptions because that is what this technology is all about. So we are learning about that." African News AgencyANA